



Senator Harry Reid

A Report to Veterans in Nevada

Spring 2002

reid.senate.gov

LETTER TO VETERANS FROM SENATOR HARRY REID

Dear Friends,

I have worked closely with the Veterans' Administration (VA) and support the work it does assisting those Americans who have devoted their lives to serving this great country. I know how important the VA is in not only providing veterans' medical and disability benefits but also funding research and services that improve veterans' quality of life. I have a consistent record of supporting veterans in the past, and I can assure you that I will continue to work for veterans in the future.

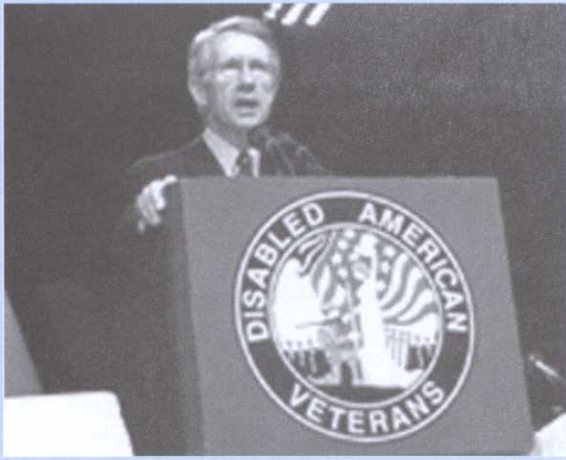
As you may know, last year I sponsored the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2001, S. 170. This legislation would correct an inequity that has existed for over 100 years. Under current law disabled military retirees who have a service connected disability must waive a portion of their retired pay in order to receive disability compensation. My legislation would allow them to receive both retired pay and disability compensation concurrently. Unfortunately, after the bill was authorized by Congress, the House of Representatives failed to fund the program last year.

I am here to tell you today: the fight is not over.

Once again our nation is calling upon members of the military to defend democracy and freedom. Eliminating the inequity relating to concurrent receipt of military retired pay would send a clear signal to the men and women in uniform during this time of conflict that our government takes care of those who make sacrifices for our nation.

I am not giving up on this bill. I know it is extremely important to you, and you should know that it is extremely important to me. I recently sent a letter to Senator Kent Conrad, Chairman of the Budget Committee, urging him to recognize the need for funding for concurrent receipt in this year's budget resolution. My concurrent receipt legislation has overwhelming support in Congress, and I am hopeful that with the help of the House of Representatives it will receive funding this spring for the fiscal year 2003 budget.

Senator Harry Reid



Senator Harry Reid addresses disabled veterans: "I am here today to announce my plans to correct the discriminatory concurrent receipt law – and ensure that our disabled veterans get their fair retirement pay."



Senator Reid recently met with disabled veterans to talk about issues concerning them in Nevada. From left to right: Bill Brezinski, Pete Buell, Senator Reid, Marina Jiminez and Jerry Ogle.

What Concurrent Receipt Will Mean For You

For years I have been trying to pass my Retired Pay Restoration Act to permit the concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability compensation.

Military retirement pay and disability compensation are earned and awarded for different reasons. Retirement is normally awarded for 20 years of service, while disability is awarded to a veteran for service-connected injuries. In 1891, legislation was enacted prohibiting the concurrent receipt of military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation. Thus, even today disabled military retirees are only entitled to receive disability compensation if they agree to waive a portion of their retired pay equal to the amount of compensation.

Put simply, if a veteran refuses to give up his retirement pay, the veteran must forfeit his disability benefits.

This restriction is not acceptable. Our government needs to make sure the more than 560,000 disabled veterans have access to all the funds they deserve, and I will continue to fight for that correction.

TRICARE

Last year Congress passed TRICARE through the National Defense Authorization Act for 2001, allowing, for the first time, veterans 65 and older who are Medicare-eligible to retain military health care benefits as a supplement to Medicare or as a primary care manager.

To get more information on TRICARE in your central region call 1-888-TRIWEST (874-9378) or go to www.triwest.com

KEEPING IN TOUCH



Please feel free to contact me or my staff offices with questions or concerns you might have regarding these or any other issues. We value your input and stand ready to work with you.

Harry Reid in Nevada:

Las Vegas: (702) 388-5020

Reno: (775) 686-5750

Carson City: (775) 882-7343

Washington Office:

528 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

(202) 224-3542 / (202) 224-7327 (fax)

E-mail: senator_reid@reid.senate.gov *Online:* reid.senate.gov